NES 334/RELI 334: History of Islamic Thought

Fall 2007

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 11-11:50a.m.

Instructor: Dr. Maha Nassar
Office hours: Mondays, 12:15-2p.m., or by appointment
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TA: Mark Voss
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This course provides an overview of Islamic social and intellectual history from the origins of Islam to the present day. The first half of the semester is devoted to the development of Islamic thought in the classical period and covers such topics as the Qur'an, Islamic law, theology, and mysticism, as well as the relationship between Sunni and Shi'i Muslims. The second half of the semester concentrates on Islamic thought in the modern world, including the impact of colonialism and nationalism and the debates among a variety of Muslim intellectuals and movements. We examine the writings of selected Muslim intellectuals and also pay special attention to the ways in which modern Muslim thinkers draw upon the classical period in order to support their own arguments and criticize those of their opponents.

Course Expectations:

1. Attend all class sessions
2. Complete all reading assignments
3. Complete all graded assignments

All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Also, absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.

Assignments:

1. Qur'an paper (4-5 pages) 20%
2. Midterm 30%
3. Second Paper (4-5 pages) 20%
4. Final Exam 30%

Assignments for Honors Students: Please see page six.

Note on plagiarism: Plagiarism is a <u>very</u> serious offence. Be sure to cite properly other people's ideas in your writings. <u>If any part of a paper is plagiarized, the student will receive a zero for the assignment. No</u>

exceptions. Also note: Wikipedia.com is not an acceptable resource. Students citing or found using Wikipedia will lose a letter grade on their writing.

Finally, be sure to read UA's Code of Academic Integrity at: http://web.arizona.edu/~dos/uapolicies/cai1.html#responsibility

Textbooks: The following textbooks are available for purchase at the Student Union bookstore:
Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam,* 3rd Edition
Heinz Halm, *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution*
Charles Kurzman, ed., *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*
Other assigned readings are available on Electronic Reserve (ER): http://eres.library.arizona.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?page=search
Additional scholarly information about Islam may be found on the web at: http://www.uga.edu/islam

Extra Credit: Students will have the opportunity for extra credit. One extra credit submission will be accepted towards your midterm exam grade, and one extra credit submission will be accepted towards you final exam grade. Each extra credit assignment can be worth a maximum of ten points. The extra credit assignment is a short, written paper, 1-2 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. They can be short response papers to campus lectures related to the Middle East, or reactions to additional readings and/or films. More specific extra credit options will be discussed in class, and only approved assignments will be accepted. Submissions will be graded on content as well as form.

Classroom Etiquette: Please come to class prepared to learn. Students engaged in other activities during class distract the instructor and other students. This includes reading the newspaper, doing other assignments, passing notes, text messaging and talking to neighbors. Students found to be doing any of these activities will be asked to leave the classroom. Also, if your cell phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately.

Students with Disabilities: If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. If you would like to discuss how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate, please see me by appointment or during office hours.

PART 1: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Week 1: Setting the Stage

Aug. 20: Introduction - What is Islamic thought?

Aug. 22: The Abrahamic roots of Islam

Denny, pp. 3-28

Aug. 24: Setting the scene at the dawn of Islam

Denny, pp. 29-43

Week 2: The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

Aug. 27: Muhammad’s life in Mecca

Denny, pp. 47-61

Aug. 29: The *hijra* and life in Medina

Denny, pp. 61-71

Ali Bulaç, “The Medina Document,” in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 169-178)

Aug. 31: Muhammad’s message

Denny, pp. 97-127

Week 3: The Qur’an

Sep. 3: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Sep. 5: God and the Messengers

Denny, pp. 128-148

Sep. 7: Qur’anic Ethics and Social Responsibilities

ER: Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur’an* (selections)

Week 4: Foundations of Sunni Islam

Sep. 10: The “rightly-guided caliphs” and the spread of Islam

Denny, pp. 72-81

Sep. 12: Sunni politics and rule

Denny, 81-90; 198-205

Sep. 14: Sunni views of the past and present: *sira, hadith*

Denny, pp. 149-163

ER: Nawawi, *Forty Hadith of Nawawi* (selections)

QUR’AN PAPER DUE.

Week 5: Foundations of Shi‘i Islam

Sep. 17: Questions of succession and the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala

Halm, pp. 3-20

Sep. 19: The Shi‘i Concept of Imams

Halm, 21-37

Denny, pp. 205-207

Sep. 21: After the Imams: Sources of authority within Shi‘i Islam

Halm, pp. 88-106

ER: *Nahj al-Balagha* (selections)

Week 6: Islamic Theology and Philosophy

Sep. 24: Theological debates: God's attributes, predeterminism, faith, leadership

Denny, pp. 164-179

Sep. 26: Muslim creeds (*'aqida*)

Denny, pp. 179-183

ER: "Creed of al-Ash'ari"

Sep. 28: Philosophical debates: Nature of God, reason and revelation

Denny, pp. 183-186

ER: Ibn Rushd (Averroes), "Incoherence of the Incoherence"

Week 7: Islamic Law

Oct. 1: *Shari'a, fiqh, madhhab:* the foundations of Islamic law

Denny, pp. 187-198

Oct. 3: REVIEW

Oct. 5: **MIDTERM**

Week 8: Sufi Mysticism

Oct. 8: Early Sufi mysticism and asceticism

Denny, pp. 211-237

Oct. 10: The Formation of the Sufi *tariqas*

Denny, pp. 238-259

Oct. 12: A Sufi master: the life and thought of Rumi

ER: William Chittick, "Love," in *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (selections)

PART 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN THE MODERN WORLD

Week 9: The Global Spread of Islam

Oct. 15: Spread of Islam in the Early Modern Period (16th-17th centuries)

Denny, pp. 91-93

ER: Anthony Reid, "Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia"

ER: "The Poems of Hamza Fansuri (selections)

HONOR STUDENTS: PAPER TOPICS DUE

Oct. 17: The Relationship between the Islamic World and Europe

ER: Hodgson, "The Role of Islam in World History"

Oct. 19: Attempts at Renewal in the 18th Century

Denny, pp. 315-321

Halm, pp. 106-118

ER: Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-tawhid* (selections)

Week 10: The Legacy of Imperialism, the Challenges of Nationalism

Oct. 22: Imperialism, and reform in the 19th century

Denny, pp. 321-323

Halm, pp. 115-127

Oct. 24: Al-Afghani, ʻAbduh, Sayyid Ahmad Khan: 3 Muslim Reformist Thinkers

Denny, pp. 323-328

ER: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, selections from *Modernist Islam*

Oct. 26 Nationalism as an alternative form of identity

Denny, pp. 328-339

ʻAli ʻAbd al-Raziq, "Message Not Government, Religion Not State," in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 29-36)

Muhammad Natsir, "The Indonesian Revolution," in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 59-66)

Week 11: Defending Islam: The Rise of "Islamism" and Militant Groups

Oct. 29: Sayyid Qutb and the ideology of Islamism

Denny, pp. 340-346

ER: Qutb, *Milestones* (selections)

Oct. 31: Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution

Halm, pp. 127-150

Nov. 2: Militant Jihad: Supporters and Critics

Halm, "The Shiʻites as a Party in the Middle East Conflicts" (pp. 157-161)

ER: Usama Bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad," in *Messages to the World*

ER: ʻAbd al-Hakim Murad, "Bin Laden's Violence is a Heresy Against Islam"

ER: ʻAbd al-Hakim Sherman Jackson, "Jihad in the Modern World" in *Seasons*

Week 12: Gendering Islam: Debates regarding women's rights and responsibilities

Nov. 5: New interpretations of sacred texts

Denny, pp. 346-350

Amina Wadud-Muhsin, "Qur'an and Woman," in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 127-138)

Fatima Mernissi, "A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam" in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 112-126)

Nov. 7: Challenging social conventions

Nazira Zein ed-Din, "Unveiling and Veiling" in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 101-106)

Benazir Bhutto, "Politics and the Muslim Woman" in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 107-111)

ER: Yvonne Ridley, "How I came to love the veil"

Nov. 9: Contemporary Debate: Women Leading Friday Prayers

ER: Fatwas by Khaled Abou El Fadl, Yusuf al-Qaradawi

ER: Hamza Yusuf, "Can Women Lead Prayer?"

ER: "What Would the Prophet Do?"

SECOND PAPER DUE

Week 13: Updating Islam: Calls for Reform in the Political and Social Spheres

Nov. 12: **NO CLASSES – VETERAN'S DAY**

Nov. 14: The relationship between democracy and Islam

Mehdi Bazargan, "Religion and Liberty," in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 73-84)

Rachid Ghannouchi, "Participation in the Non-Islamic Government," in *Liberal Islam* (pp. 89-95)

Sadek Sulaiman, "Democracy and *shura,*" in *Liberal Islam* (pp.96-98)

Nov. 16: Rethinking the Qur'an, hadith, and shari'a: The Progressive View

Denny, 363-380

'Abdullahi Ahmed Na'im, "*Shari'a* and Basic Human Rights Concerns" in *Liberal Islam* (pp.222-238)

Week 14: Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?

Nov. 19: Views of the "clash of civilization" thesis

ER: Waardenbrg, "Reflections on the West" in *Islamic Thought in the 20th Century* (pp. 260-295)

ER: Mark LeVine, *Why they Don't Hate Us* (selections)

ER: *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (selections)

ER: *Alliance of Civilizations* report

Nov. 21: Muslims in the West

ER: Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (selections)

ER: Seyyid Hossein Nasr, "The Spiritual Needs of Western Man and the Message of Sufism," in *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (selections)

Nov. 23: **NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 15: Islamic Thought in America

Nov. 26: History of Muslims in America

Denny, pp. 350-362

ER: Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America* (selections)

ER: Mohja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf: A Novel*, pp. 18-37

HONORS STUDENTS: RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Nov. 28: Contemporary Issues for Muslim Americans

ER: 'Umar Abd-Allah, "Islam and the Cultural Imperative"

ER: "Embracing Islam" in *Muslim Women in America*, pp. 40-60

Nov. 30: Muslim Americans after 9/11

ER: Geneive Abdo, "Imams for a New Generation" in *Mecca and Main Street*, pp. 11-36

Week 16: Wrap-up

Dec. 3: Islam on the Web

Take a look at the following websites and come with your questions and comments:

http://www.islamicity.com
http://www.muslimwakeup.com
http://al-islam.org
http://www.islam-qa.com (click on English)

Dec. 5: So what IS Islamic Thought???

REVIEW

FINAL EXAM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7th, FROM 11:00A.M. TO 1:00P.M.

Graded Assignments for Section 2H (The Honors section):
Students in the Honors section are expected to attend all classes and communicate with me about their research paper. You will select a topic of your choice and prepare a succinct bibliography to be turned in to me on Monday, **October 15th**. This project should involve work on a topic covered in class, and you are encouraged (but not required) to look at primary sources in translation. The final paper is due in class, Monday, **November 26th**. You are also strongly encouraged to submit a draft to me at least one week prior to this due date, although this is not obligatory. The paper must be in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides. Students in this section will not write the second short paper, due November 9th, but will be responsible for all other assignments.

Grade distribution is as follows:

1. Qur'an paper (4-5 pages) 20%
2. Midterm 30%
3. Research Paper (7-10 pages) 30%
4. Final Exam 20%

Final note: With the exception of grade and absence policies, information in this syllabus may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.